

## Committee on Equal Opportunities Report 1997-2002 KY Plan and OCR Partnership

The Committee on Equal Opportunities met June 26, 2002. The council staff reported that Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions continue to make progress toward achieving the commitments outlined in the Partnership Agreement with the U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and *The 1997-2002 Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities*. The agreement, with the exception of the requirement of Kentucky State University to implement strategies to increase student performance on the PRAXIS II teacher certification test, is on track to be completed by December 31, 2002. A summary of the committee's activities follows.

### **Committee Actions and Reports**

*The Kentucky Plan and Partnership Agreement:* The U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has provided comments on the third status report stating "OCR is encouraged with the progress the Commonwealth and its postsecondary institutions continue to make in implementing the Partnership Agreement. The efforts show a true commitment to achieving and exceeding the goals of the Partnership Agreement." The OCR reminds the Commonwealth of three aspects of the agreement to postpone the renovation of KSU's Young Hall dormitory: 1) the Commonwealth would make the renovation a high priority in the 2002-04 budget recommendation; 2) the CPE would conduct periodic inspections of the facility; and 3) KSU and the CPE would conduct a comprehensive assessment of KSU's programs and resource allocations. KSU and the CPE are encouraged to move forward to complete the assessment.

The OCR is not satisfied with the UofL report on the Pathways to Success Program. They want a more thorough analysis of the program's impact on access for African American students. The partnership expires December 31, 2002.

*Granting of Waivers by the CEO:* The committee adopted revised waiver submission guidelines at its June 26 meeting. A template for submitting the information was adopted and will be distributed to the institutions for their use when appearing before the committee to request a qualitative waiver. The committee believes that the revisions will substantially improve the waiver process.

*The Education Professional Standards Board and Council on Postsecondary Education Conference on Best Practices - Teacher Education Programs:* The EPSB and the council jointly sponsored a one-day conference on Title II issues, best practices, and PRAXIS fairness issues Friday, June 28, 2002, at the Georgetown College Conference Center. Deans of the colleges of education and the colleges of arts and sciences, Title II coordinators, and provost/vice presidents of academic affairs were invited to participate in the conference. The council and the EPSB shared equally in the cost of the conference.

*KSU Teacher Education Program – Student Performance:* Kentucky State University attended the June 26 meeting to provide an update on the status of the teacher education program. The status report included information regarding recent workshops for students and faculty and the performance of students on the fall 2001 and spring 2002 PRAXIS exam. The partnership directs KSU to: 1) implement initiatives that strengthen and enhance the KSU teacher education program; 2) identify "best practices" that have been employed to strengthen the teacher education program; and 3) implement specific systematic strategies that are advantageous to increasing student performance rates on the PRAXIS II. KSU reported those students taking the PRAXIS in fall 2001 and spring 2002 scored much higher than the 36 percent that was reported in April this year. The committee was encouraged by the report but noted that more needed to be done to assist the students in the program to be successful.

*UofL Teacher Education Program:* The University of Louisville attended the April 15 meeting to provide an update on the status of the teacher education program. The committee requested that the university return to its June meeting to provide more detail about the teacher education program. Dr. John Welsh, acting dean, presented data on the enrollment, retention, graduation, certification to teach, and pass rates of students in the teacher education program for the years 1996-97 – 2000-01. The data showed that enrollment of African American students in the teacher education program at UofL began to decline at about the time the university revised its baccalaureate program to be a five-year program. The university has adopted an action plan to increase the enrollment, graduation, and certification rates of African American students in the teacher education program. The CEO was very complimentary of the university for its efforts.

*2002-2004 Operating and Capital Budget Recommendations:* The council staff updated the committee on the status of the council's 2002-04 budget request, KSU enhancement, the federal land-grant match, and building renovations.

*Reports to CEO by Institutional Representatives:* The institutions requested and the CEO agreed to allow time at each meeting for institutional representatives to report on campus diversity initiatives. The committee asked UofL to provide more information regarding the success of the Pathways Program. There is concern that the program may have a negative impact in the enrollment of African Americans at UofL. The KCTCS is asked to attend the October CEO meeting to share more information regarding its affirmative action plan for the administrative offices in Lexington, Kentucky. And the committee asked to receive more information on the progress of institutions to implement plans to increase the presence of African Americans in the Bucks for Brains programs.

## **Activities**

*Empowering the Black Community:* The Office of the Attorney General hosted the 2002 Empowering the Black Community Conference May 22, 2002, at the Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center in downtown Frankfort. The conference addressed critical issues that often plague African Americans. Topics included: economic development, education, health, juvenile and adult justice, technology, and community advocacy. Approximately 325 individuals from across the Commonwealth participated. The educational session, "Educating Black Youth: Critical

Issues from the Cradle to the Workforce," focused on the importance of early preparation for postsecondary education. A common theme throughout the presentation was the importance of parental involvement, which included but was not limited to interaction with site-based councils and PTA groups, regular visits to the child's school, knowing the child's strengths and weaknesses, addressing academic deficiencies in order to empower students to successfully transition through the educational system, and promoting a healthy respect for and understanding of the need for a challenging curriculum.

*The Second Annual Governor's Minority Student College Preparation Program Conference:* Murray State University hosted the 2<sup>ND</sup> Annual Statewide Conference for participants of the Governor's Minority Student College Preparation Program June 12-13, 2002. Approximately 150 students, parents, and program directors from across the Commonwealth attended. The day-and-a-half conference offered students in grades 6-8 an opportunity to experience campus life first hand. Students attended the following concurrent sessions: Advanced Placement Courses and the Pre-College Curriculum, African American History and Culture, Support Systems that Work: GEAR UP, the Proficient Jr. and Sr. Conference, Upward Bound, the YMCA Black Achievers, and Technology in the New Millennium.

A parent session also was held to discuss the importance of parental involvement in preparing youth for postsecondary education. Topics included financing postsecondary education through KEES, the pre-college curriculum and advanced placement courses, and academic support systems such as the GEAR UP Kentucky program and the YMCA Black Achievers. Next year's conference will be hosted by Eastern Kentucky University.

*The 15<sup>TH</sup> Annual Academically Proficient African American High School Junior and Senior Conference:* Northern Kentucky University hosted the 15<sup>TH</sup> Annual Academically Proficient African American High School Junior and Senior Conference June 14-15, 2002. Approximately 150 students, parents, and college representatives from across Kentucky participated. Workshop topics included: financing your education, choosing a college and career, developing coping skills, and strengthening communication skills. A parent workshop was also included. The conference included a college fair to allow college representatives to talk with Kentucky resident African American high school juniors and seniors and their parents. The goal of the conference was to offer information and support to students transitioning from high school to postsecondary education.

The next meeting of the council's Committee on Equal Opportunities is Monday, August 19, 2002, in Meeting Room A at the council offices in Frankfort.

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